To calm the terror of the disciples when they saw him walking on the water Jesus came near and spoke words of reassurance. Their significance is to be explained from the Old Testament, and particular *Isaiah* 43. "Courage! . . . Don't be afraid" is God's word to his people in their distress: "Israel, the Lord who created you says, 'Do not be afraid – I will save you. I have called you by name - you are mine. When you pass through the deep waters, I will be with you; your troubles will not overwhelm you.'" (*Isaiah* 43:1) "It is I", literally "I am", may simply be self-identification, but there may just possibly an echo of the Old Testament form of God's self-revelation (as at the Burning Bush), "I am (He)". Mastery of the sea is a divine attribute, and this incident ranks with the stilling of the storm in showing that the power of God is revealed in Jesus: "Long ago the Lord made a road through the sea, a path through the swirling waters." (*Isaiah* 43:16)

What makes these stories rather strange, however, is that mingled in with the symbolism are details which have the flavour of an eye-witness account - like, for example, "They sat down on the green grass". When Jesus walks on the water it is between three and six o'clock in the morning. The best time for fishing is at dawn.

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